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Canadian Poetry Magazine

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CONTENTS

The Dream and the Reality — *Dorothy Cameron Smith*
The Last Friend — *M. E. Drew*
Sleep Well — *Samuel Barr Elder*
Crow-Call — *Joan Finnigan*
On the Death of a Farm Wife — *Allison L. Burnett*
Mockingbird — *Bernice Ames*
Around the Bend you Came — *Margaret Furness MacLeod*
Vimy Veterans' Dinner — *Leo Cox*
Dust — *Margaret Furness MacLeod*
Reach for Your Dream — *Margaret Furness MacLeod*
Highest Door — *Joseph Joel Keith*
Vilanelle of the Dead Year — *Fred Cogswell*
"Undoubtedly . . . Your Son" — *J. R. G. Adams*
The Burning Green — *Christopher G. Dafoe*
Reason For Living — *Madge Macbeth*
Railway Platform — *Muriel Armstrong Flower*
The Pomegranates — *K. W. Maurer*
Lost Wine — *K. W. Maurer*
Newton in July — *Lynn Raney*
Of Fences and Walls — *Len G. Selle*
Love Us Not — *Lynn Raney*
A Whitman Pilgrimage — *The Editor*
Walt Whitman — *Elizabeth Robert Andrews*
Gibbon Memorial Unveiled — *The Editor*
Book Notices — *The Editors*

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. . . "there has never been a period when so many poets were honestly attempting to say so many different things by means of such different techniques".

—Louis MacNeice

"Poetry is a criticism of language. Poetry is concrete, personal and exact. We live in a time when language tends to be used in ways that are abstract, generalized, impersonal and inaccurate".

—Stephen Spender
— in Chapter IV — On Poetry, from
"Highlights of Modern Literature"
(Mentor Books, New York)

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THE DREAM AND THE REALITY

She stood, to dream a moment in the street,
And dreaming, saw a starlit balcony,
Where milk-white petals fell beneath her feet,
And minstrels sang a vibrant melody.
In lovely gown, with pearls against her throat,
She waited for her love to warm her sight;
A near cathedral struck a soft bell-note,
That echoed sweetly on the summer night.

She saw him coming, straight he was, and tall,
With eager eyes, and hair as black as jet;
Swiftly, he climbed the moon-swept garden wall,
As Romeo would climb to Juliet.

She sighed, and turning on her way, she went
To meet her lover in the tenement.

Dorothy Cameron Smith,
Stoney Creek, Ont.

THE LAST FRIEND

The lean road disappears ahead
Into a blue infinity.
The figure of the last friend dissolves
Into a sea
Populated with others I have watched
Down the same road,
The others I have loved and killed with holding.
What greed the goad
That stretches arms to beauty, hands that must
Possess or die
Even while I know the bird most nearly owned
Is free to fly?

M. E. Drew,
Kirkland Lake, Ont.

SLEEP WELL

"Ochone" — The harp is silent,
The singer's voice no longer calls;
All that is left is the old mother
and her tears and the grave.

The South of the isle is old —
So much blood has covered,
So many brave ones fell
Before the savage horde.

O last isle of the West,
Remember how long you stood
Defying the earth's evil!
So now — sleep well . . .

Samuel Barr Elder,
London, Ont.

CROW-CALL

Oh, I went down to Whitby early
In the March-time of the year;
Not for love nor sentiment,
But a crow called here

Somewhere in the fields behind our house at Crew;
And the far cry stirred
The winter-stilled heart of me:
Only the call of a bird . . .

And the street became anathema;
I flung my apron down,
I took my two sons by the hand
And fled to Whitby town,

Thinking to rush headlong into the arms
Of spring somewhere about the bay;
But all we found was a pussy-willow,
Baring his brave and velvet gray;

All we found was some sugar snow and slush ice,
And a patch of grass,
And all we heard was the far-off running of water
In some Plutian underpass.

But the crow still called in the brain,
And he wandered to the wood.
There might have been a murmur in the maples,
But, even as we listening stood,

A wild wind came through and shrieked to see
The big pines bend,
And drove us disillusioned to the fire-side
Of an old and cherished friend.

I went down to Whitby town too early
For the horned lark, the mourning dove,
But, ah, 'tis sweet at twenty-nine,
To gather sons of love

For no better reason than the calling
Of a crow at Crew,
And sally forth to a place where the fairest spring
Came once a time to you!

Joan Finnigan,
Downsview, Ont.

ON THE DEATH OF A FARM WIFE

He sat at the table and snapped the crust
Of the bread he had sown with his own brown hands
And tilted back on the bark of his chair
And watched a spider spinning softly in the dust
That nested in the cracks of the walls. He ran
His fingers through his thin wet hair
And dropped his head and uttered the breath
Of a word. Outside the cattle chewed and
Rolled their lazy tails at the sifted air
And the cowdog dreamed under the barn, while the deft
Swallows showered in the puddles of sand
That leaned on the house. The rusted pan lay there
On the porch, on the same and gristed step
Where she lay it before the year turned grey.
He uttered the breath of a curse to the nail
That had slipped from the eaten beam, and he wept
For the silver hair that he lifted away
From the bleeding boards and for the pale
Red smile that he carried through the bedroom door.
And on this day the barn and the fields grew old,
And the dirt brown paths where they walked and laughed
Cracked and pushed up weeds. On the granary floor
Where the mice had chewed and sneezed at the cold
Spilled crusted shavings of the last year's scythe.
And that same eye that brought apples to the trees
And daisies to the fields coated the bark
And the spears of brushing hay with a cold grey ice.
A crust of bread above the worn and splintered knees
Mourned aloud and fell in crumbs when the sun grew dark . . .
While the spider listened and tightened his splice.
It could have been the whispering hay that carried him
Out of the house and down the dark and pebbled path
Where the river slid with the moon in a wave
Or the voice that fell when the grass began to spin.

He sat on the river bank and let the grief
In the waters of his eyes fall to the stones and be bathed
In a white untroubled moon, and so crisp in the light
He saw her eyes and a smile on her pale red lips;
He saw the fields dripping in dew and heard the cock
Blow strong in the vacuum of the chilled September air,
And he saw the naked trees burst green at the tip.
The river drew his eyes in her circles and the rock
That rose cold and grey in the dropping of the night
Shone and belled with a kitchen song and the spider
Fell by the long loaves and died on the shining floor.
While the moon flickered and burned down he sat with her
In his eyes, and the morning rose brighter
And higher than he had seen it a year of grief before.
And as he mourned in the sun with his face in his hands
He thought of the moon that kept to the clouds
And of the moon that slid in a wave, and of the sun
That sliced the sky, and of the sun that drew from the land
The seed he had thrown. And he thought of the face in the shroud
Of the black pine box and of the face the moon had spun.
He lifted himself from the tear wet bank and walked to where
They had listened and laughed with the dew tongued trees
And hand to hand they moved under the climbing light.
And as surely as the river runs dark and deep as sorrow
She would follow his hand as the moon in the wave,
And as surely as the moon burns thin with the slipping of the night
She would raise her smile as the sun in the morrow
And spill her light through the door of her grave.

Allison L. Burnett,
Ithaca, New York.

MOCKINGBIRD

Over light's sheer steeples
through rich folds of rest
into canyons of thought
floods the sparkling song.

No love as delirious
no repertoire as boundless,
this bantam buffoon
courts dawn into dusk into dawn.

Drilled awake
I walk through symphonic downpour
knowing bird-song
will measure each movement.

Bernice Ames,
Los Angeles, Cal.

SAILOR'S TOWN
(Victoria)

On green, tempestuous days, beneath a sail,
Quick-glimpsed across the water intervening,
She wears a plangent look with seagulls keening
Above her head. The morning's peacock tail
Of cumulus, wind-noisy in the gale,
Blows in her eyes. I feel the schooner leaning
Into the wind, through whiplashed seas careening
Spume-coated to her side, as to a grail.
She lies upon her siren's rock and waits
On Juan de Fuca Strait, brass voiced and bold,
Worth any rover's dream and sailor's yearning,
For when my prow has nudged the harbor gates
She beckons and once more I am cajoled
From lesser loves to joy of new returning.

Donna Dickey Guyer,
Chicago, Ill.

AROUND THE BEND YOU CAME

Summer, to hide her age,
Had dressed in all the fripperies of spring
To dance upon the hill.

Flocks of migrating birds
Planning their flight, became irresolute
And begged a short reprieve.

Around the bend you came
With buoyant stride and face alight with youth —
(Yet they had said you died.)

And I, benumbed by joy,
Let fall the purple asters I had culled
To follow where you led.

Startled by my approach
The robins ceased their gossip and took wing
Tossing the yellow leaves.

Where had the vision sped?
Tireless I sought it through the winding ways
Though it eluded me.

Summer drowsed in the wood,
While dreathly winds tore through my heart
And rain splashed on my cheek.

Margaret Furness MacLeod,
Montreal, Que.

DUST

Dust everywhere!
The keyboard and the mantel-shelf
All coated grey:
How I have fought it.
Yet, were God to breathe
Upon this pile,
What lovely being
Might smile back at me.
What yesterday I rudely
Brushed away
Today I touch more reverently.
Dust everywhere!
And every grain
Kin to the cosmic me.

Margaret Furness MacLeod,
Montreal, Que.

VIMY VETERANS' DINNER

We aging veterans, grey-bristled, bald,
In thinning numbers, ease nostalgic hunger:
Flash-back of talk toward life when blood could scald
In love or battle and when truth was younger.

Never admit that, since those whining shells
Powdered the front-line to a talcum tomb
And buried us in caves of limey doom,
No April cleanses us of those loud hells.

Laugh now — it seems eternity ago —
Survivors of annihilation, sing,
Release the bawdy spirit, mock old woe!
For none of us has ever felt Death's sting:

Close though He always was (remember how?)—
Yet never was, my men, so close as now . . .

Leo Cox,
Montreal.

REACH FOR YOUR DREAM

Only a step lies between
The dream and the dreamer.
Will she fold it
Into her heart's infinity,
Or leave it to sink
In the marshland of reason?

Oh captive bird
Singing an alien song
In an alien land,
Joy is your heritage.
Sever the fetters that bind you —
Reach for your dream —
Then open the door to the forest,
And float your song
On the edge of the cloud
Obscuring the rainbow.

The stranger, seeing the empty cage,
Will say —
"Where has the bird flown?"
The friend, though he
Know not the dream,
Will rejoice with the dreamer
In its fulfillment.

Margaret Furness MacLeod,
Montreal, Que.

THE CASTLE

Spring breaks the harshness of the crumbling tower,
Rolls out the hills in softened nap of green;
This pastoral disguising of the scene
Betrays us, the fiction of a flower
Has answers only for a wistful lover.
While in the forest now the sun-turned leaves
Have hid the winter agony of trees,
Can we forget the quick-eyed birds that hover
Over their prey? The violent struggle still
Among the shadows of the forest calls;
Ghosts only wander in the lonely halls,
Trapped in the dreaming castle on the hill.

Frances Bardacke,
San Diego, Cal.

HIGHEST DOOR

I heard the sharp click
of my shut lock.
I heard nothing still
as I started to walk.

I flung the gate wide;
I let it swing,
but I did not pause
to hear it sing.

The lane was as long
as a hall of lore,
and out ahead
was the field's door.

The two hands moved
the thick, tight bush;
feet stepped wide
in a world of hush.

Feet stepped far
on field's that were bare,
in and out
of the woodland there,

past no growth
seen on the ground.
Three doors I passed,
doors of small sound;

and then a new door
of no sound at all;
empty, yet heard
clear silences call.

On a carpet of soft,
velvety gloom,
the steps no part
of a darkened room,

ascending with one
high footstep, light
and still, I rose
up the stair of night.

Joseph Joel Keith,
Los Angeles, Cal.

VILANELLE OF THE DEAD YEAR

Beyond the reach of sound and sight
The living days and night have rolled:
Another year has died tonight.

Its dying once was sheer delight
So much I longed to see unfold
Beyond the reach of sound and sight

Another year with prospects bright:
I had no ears for bells that tolled,
"Another year has died tonight."

But now I watch the year's last light
Burn down to ashes bleak and cold
Beyond the reach of sound and sight

Nor thrill to see the New Year bright
Flame out above the housetop's gold:
Another year has died tonight

For one who hears the bells aright
And knows too well that he is old:
Beyond the reach of sound and sight
Another year has died tonight.

Fred Cogswell,
Frederickton, N.B.

"UNDOUBTEDLY . . . YOUR SON"

(News item: A German survivor reports to the R.C.A.F. the circumstances of an engagement, enclosing certain relics.)

We buried him at sea, ja—
No blanket tossed,
No ensign billowing
But his blue barathea —
No time for flying togs —
To the cockpit leaped,
Gunned his still-smoking fighter
And diving *upward* . . . Fogs
Wreathed the raft off Passero
Where his mate lingering clung.
Our other Messersmidt attaked,
Recoiled into the clouds . . .
Hard the Spitfire hung — O
Blind, unwavering. We turned,
And one split-second sped
The hail of nothingness.
Then from that azure vault uprose
Memorial to heaven,
Higher than Sicilian groves . . .
We buried him at sea.

J. R. G. Adams,
Toronto, Ont.

THE BURNING GREEN

There was a green field
In which I wandered
Where birds sang and foxes sported.
There was a patch of blue, above
The burning green, that was my sky.
I was a young stag
Stalking my doe in chest-high grass
And thinking that
The blazing sun would never end.
I swam neck deep in singing streams
And, in the shallows, tossed rain-washed
Lilies to the thirsting sands.

I did not see the hunter Age
With rifle cocked
Standing by the forests
Shadowed rim.
I did not see him raise his hand
And gaze along the steel-blue shaft
To send destruction screaming
Through the air . . .

The sun was gore
And fresh blood stung
My startled eyes . . . and green turf
Rushed toward me . . . then oblivion.
My meadows vanished and my love
Was gone
And rain fell violently
Upon my stiffening clay . . .

Christopher G. Dafoe,
Winnipeg, Man.

REASON FOR LIVING

When I am gone, will it be as though
I had not been?
Will my ashes, a lonely little heap
at best,
Drift too thin and far to catch
the conscious eye
And lie unseen upon the earth?

Will the countless words that I
have spoken
Seek the distant spaces as, riding on
sound waves
They grow fainter and more frail until
at last
They are too hushed to lean upon the ear?

Some ash is labelled like a
garden seed;
Some ash is boldly called by a
great name;
But unless it gives beauty to
the uninspired sod,
Warmth to chill hearts and laughter
to sad lips

It has no reason to exist. Who will
kneel after
The first scattering breeze and gather it
with tender hands?
As for me, what matter if I
am gone?
What matter if I'd never been?

Madge Macbeth
Ottawa, Ont.

RAILWAY PLATFORM

The sooty hiss,
The elongated rumble,
Draw in their wake
The shreiking night.
But we who once would dart
Swiftly and lightly
Anywhere north,
Anywhere west,
Anywhere —
We, only, stay
Anchored,
Weighing and pausing
As we tarry;
Soberly and in sorrow
Denying the bright bauble
Of tomorrow . . .
And the tearing whistle of the night
Shreds hope,
Shreds laughter;
Scatters the dust
Across our darkened hearts.

Muriel Armstrong Flower,
Downsview, Ont.

THE POMEGRANATES

Hard Pomegranates, yielding under
Excess of seeds — methinks that these
Are lordly brows, that burst asunder
With their own discoveries!

And if the suns that ripened you,
O pomegranates gaping wide,
Have worked upon you till with pride
You crack your ruby screens in two,

And if the dry gold of your rind
In answer to some force, I find,
Breaks into jewels juicy-red, —

It makes my dreaming soul conjecture,
By this luminous rupture led,
Its own secret architecture.

Paul Valéry,
Translated by K. W. Maurer
from the French.

LOST WINE

One day, I cast in Ocean's brine
(But know no more beneath what skies),
A tiny drop of costly wine, —
To nothingness a sacrifice . . .

Who willed your loss, O precious wine?
Obeying what soothsaying mood,
Or my sad heart's obscure design,
Did I pour wine, and dream of blood?

The sea, transparent once again,
After a vaporous, rosy stain,
Regained its wonted purity . . .

Lost was that wine, and drunk the deep! . . .
In the salt air I seemed to see
Forms, of profoundest import, leap . . .

Paul Valéry,
Translated by K. W. Maurer
from the French,
Winnipeg, Man.

NEWTON IN JULY

Basking
eyelids pierced with sun
upon the warm hillside
the singing amber grass

Fused
upon the earth's great joint
the chemicals of life
wet on glabrous brow
body, a fragile emptied flask.

Beneath
the latten wheel of earth
turns rhythmic slow

Above
a silvery spark of sky
the heavy humming air.

Shimmer of summer breeze
and sucking space swings close
multiple magnet

Frail clinging flask
but for empty weight
blue dust atom
of the circling coverlet.

Heat shrouded heat
neon flicker flame
shivered soon
grey dust atom of the indurated star.

Lynn Raney,
Guelph, Ont.

OF FENCES AND WALLS

Fences are friendly things — if not too high —
Painted pickets or flower-trellised steel,
They mark the borders where my kingdom grows
Next to my loyal neighbor's peaceful lot.

A fence's purpose is to indicate,
Not to divide — its only walls do that.
"Keep clear of me and stay where you belong,"
Is what they'd say, I'm sure, if they could speak.
And walls are always damp like clammy tombs
Where moss and lichen fester, and the smell
Of rotted flowers sickens the pulsing throat.
They grip the fancy with a feudal chill
Of bristling towers and deep-dungeoned pain,
And ivied belfrys — lair of lurking bats . . .

Fences are friendly things, if not too high;
They weave odd sunlight patterns on the ground.
But walls cast shadows on a neighbor's lawn,
And make a stranger where a friend should be.

Len G. Selle
North Bay, Ont.

LOVE US NOT

Love us not for this moment
When our spirits flow in new content
When it is easy for us to be gracious
And know beauty —

But love us when our heart is distraught
When we are at odds with the world, inwardly fraught
Love us for what we are not
Yet might be.

Lynn Raney,
Guelph, Ont.

A WHITMAN PILGRIMAGE

At the annual Canadian Authors Association Convention, held this summer at Kingston, Ontario, one of the most interesting events proved to be a pilgrimage made by the delegates, and others interested, to nearby Bon Echo to honour the memory of Walt Whitman. This beautiful spot in the Ontario highlands has long been associated with Whitman's poetry; a quotation from one of his poems has been inscribed on the face of a great sheer rocky cliff overlooking a lake at Bon Echo; the place is soon to become a national literary shrine, due to the generosity of its owner, the well-known writer Merrill Denison.

During the *al fresco* proceedings, which were recorded by the Canadian Broadcasting Company, Merrill Denison gave an interesting account of the connection between Whitman and his own family at Bon Echo. Another speaker was John Fisher, the CBC orator. Dr. Frank Stiling, president of the Canadian Authors Association, read effectively the following tribute to Walt Whitman which was written by Elizabeth Robert Andrews of Washington, D.C., who has graciously accorded us permission to publish it here.

WALT WHITMAN
AMERICAN POET (1819-1892)

by Elizabeth Robert Andrews

A proper portrait of America's "poet of democracy", as the shaggy-bearded author of "The Leaves of Grass" is known, would have to be painted, not as a miniature, nor even as a life-sized canvas, but on huge, richly filled murals with Whitman dominating every scene.

The scenes would depict many facets of life in North America. In them would appear factories, dingy beer parlors, populous cities, crowded busses and ferries, battlefields, and hospitals. They would show America's rivers and lakes and mountains, her prairies and everglades, her peaceful farms, and a wood with a long brown path and a singing thrush. This was the stuff of Walt Whitman's dreams, of his chants and poems, of the exalted paeans of praise for his country and for the power of brotherly love that he lived his life to express.

He lived through almost the whole of the nineteenth century, and watched his country in the throes of a vast expansion period. Like a giant locust struggling to split its old skin, America was shedding worn-out concepts of puritanism, witch-hunting, slavery, and the fatalistic acceptance of poverty and hardship as the normal lot of human beings.

Walt Whitman's self-elected role was spokesman for the common man, in whom he saw great worth and beauty. But Whitman's common man had not yet figured as the chief theme of polite literature. Nor was his vigorous, unabashed sensuality palatable to the general public of his day, for he made it clear that he was a poet of the body as well as of the soul. Even his sympathetic friends, writers and critics who came to know him well, were often hesitant in their acceptance of his work, while they freely admitted the benign and winning personality of the man himself.

Whitman was born in 1819, the second of nine children, on the family farm on Long Island. The first New England Whitman had settled there in 1660. His mother's Dutch ancestors, the Van Velsors, had migrated from New York to farms nearby, and added a warmth and tolerance which was so strong in Walt.

His father he describes as mean, self-sufficient, unjust, and mentions "the blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain . . . " The oldest and youngest of his brothers were imbeciles. One sister was neurotic. His mother and his two grandmothers Walt adored, and between every one of his many jobs as a youth, he returned for long, refreshing visits with them.

At the age of 11 Walt left school and worked as an office boy in Brooklyn. When he was 12 he was apprenticed in a newspaper, and printing office, and from then on he boarded away from home. At 15 he had graduated from printer's devil to compositor, and by 20 he was a promising reporter and editor. He was a completely self-educated man, the only member of his family who ever read for pleasure. He read anything and everything he could lay hands on. As one biographer notes, "His mind took what it wanted and stayed original."

Whitman never married. According to his most sympathetic biographer, Dr. Henry Seidel Canby, "His emotional dependence upon his mother" accounted for his bachelor life. But there

were gifted women who admired him and appreciated his genius, and there were hundreds of wounded soldiers whom he nursed in hospitals during the Civil War who appreciated his enormous power of sympathy and kindness.

The first half of his life, superficially, was like that of any other young, energetic journalist and man-about-town. He was too much of a liberal for some of the papers he worked on, and was discharged by several editors when he refused to modify his point of view. He took up politics, spoke at rallies, and campaigned for the Democratic Party. In every sense he seemed a hard-working, if unusually picturesque young man.

But the creative ferment must have been slowly working all these years to explode so suddenly, in 1855, when Whitman was 36, in the first edition of "The Leaves of Grass." "The book arose out of my life in Brooklyn and New York," Whitman said, "absorbing a million people for 15 years, with an intimacy, an eagerness, and abandon, probably never equaled."

His vision, the outpouring of his soul, the whole man is in this one book. The first edition he designed and printed himself. The second edition had 32 poems. From then on all the poetry he wrote for the rest of his life was incorporated into new editions of "The Leaves of Grass." By 1860 the book had swelled to 132 poems. There were at least 10 more editions before the last one, published the year of his death in 1892, containing 423 poems. Of this book that grew in size and maturity along with him, and yet remained "The Leaves of Grass", he has said, "Who touches this, touches a man."

> Afar in the sky was a nest,
> And my soul flew thither and squat and looked out
> And saw the journeywork of suns and systems of suns,
> And that a leaf of grass is not less than they . . .
> And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors
> of Heaven . . .
>
> I am the poet of Equality.

The first edition of Whitman's poems rocked its small circle of readers back on their heels in horror. Most of those who took note of it agreed with William Howitt, the English Quaker poet, who said that it was "of a *genus* so peculiar as to embarrass us . . . "

Two contemporaries who showed an appreciate that was to become general after Whitman's death were Ralph Waldo Emerson, who found it "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed," and Henry David Thoreau, who described it as being, "though rude and sometimes ineffectual, a great primitive poem — an alarum or trumpet note ringing through the American camp."

Whitman had created a new form of poetry, almost surrealist with no rhyme or meter. His lines were as long and sometimes as rumbling as an overloaded freight train. How much responsibility is his alone for the "free verse" of the twentieth century, is hard to gauge. The movement had been started in the 1890's against the sterility of tradition for its own sake by writers like Stephen Crane and Edwin Arlington Robinson.

But it would seem that all of the tap roots of modern poetry draw something from Whitman's genius; from his promiscuous love of life expressed in earthy, colloquial speech and flowing Biblical rhythms. Obviously indebted to him were writers like Amy Lowell, Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, and Edgar Lee Masters; and later, a chorus of others including such ultra-modern poets as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

This is the form that best expressed Whitman. And Whitman is in all of his poetry — a symbol, a myth, an ego transported and infused into his world:

> The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains
> of my gab and my loitering.
> I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
> I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

Dr. Canby's tribute to Whitman is echoed by the majority of the considered opinion of today: "He made articulate and gave an enduring life in the imagination to the North American dream of a continent where the people should escape from injustices of the past and established a new and better life . . . He made articulate . . . the democratic faith which was and is the only binding national force in the United States."

GIBBON MEMORIAL UNVEILED

To honour the memory and literary work of the late Dr. John Murray Gibbon, founder of the Canadian Authors Association, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada arranged for a Memorial to him to be erected at Banff, Alberta. Under the sponsorship of the Association, the Memorial was unveiled on August 7, 1955, in an afternoon ceremony held at the Banff School of Fine Arts, in Banff. The president's tribute to Dr. Gibbon was, in Dr. Stiling's absence, read by Mrs. Barbara Villy Cormack, the vice-president of the Alberta-British Columbia Region.

The programme also included remarks by Donald Cameron, director of the School; the presentation of the memorial was made by Professor M. H. Long, a member of the Monuments Board; the unveiling was done by Marshall S. Diverty, past president of the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies (founded by Dr. Gibbon). Tributes were made also by representatives of the Stoney Indians in which tribe Dr. Gibbon had once been installed as "Chief Man-of-Many-Sides". Selections from J. Murray Gibbon's "Northland Songs" were sung by a 90-voice choir of the Banff School of Fine Arts.

Dr. Gibbon, author of many Canadian books on a wide variety of subjects including musical inspiration in poetry, was born in Ceylon, in 1875 and died in 1952.

Book Notices

"Green Timbers and Other Poems" (1955) by M. Eugenie Perry: Ryerson Press, Toronto, $2.50.

Martha Eugenie Perry, of Victoria, British Columbia, has enhanced the reputation she achieved as a poet by *Hero in Ermine and Other Poems* (1939), *Hearing a Far Call* (1943), *Canteen* (1944), and *Song in the Silence and Other Poems* (1947) by the publication of this new volume. Her approach to nature combines scientific curiosity, aesthetic, sensitivity, and transcendental philosophy. The first gives her startlingly fresh yet clear imagery and symbols, the second enables her to use the first in the manner of the genuine poet, and the third makes her an outstanding author of reflective lyrics. The rich variety of these fifty-eight poems, many of which had previously appeared in newspapers and magazines, is well suggested by the six sections under which they are now grouped: "Trees are such lovely things"; "The Cycle of the Soil"; "History and the Archives"; "Nature and the Poet"; "Time and the Timeless Stars"; "The Eternal Chorus."

—V. B. R.

"Silver Light" — by Theresa E. and Don W. Thomson, is Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book Number 159. $1.00 — Ryersons.

This slight, pleasingly-produced selection of poetry from the separate pens of Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Thomson of Ottawa, contains a number of verses which have appeared in many Canadian newspapers and in this magazine. Mrs. Thomson is executive-secretary treasurer of the Canadian Writers Foundation; her first Chap-Book appeared in 1951. Don Thomson is private secretary to a federal cabinet minister and has long been a member of the Poetry Craft Group in Ottawa. In collaboration with Verna Ross, he wrote the radio play "Tempest". The play was based on a poem in this collection, which has considerable poetic power and strong masculinity of imagination. Mrs. Thomson's verse to Duncan Campbell Scott is a moving tribute to one of the finest poets in our history.

L. C.